

REMARKS:

At the time of the final Office Action, claims 1-24 were pending. Claim 23 stands allowed, claim 21 stands objected to but has been found to contain allowable subject matter, and claims 1-20, 22 and 24 stand rejected. Pursuant to this Amendment, claim 21 has been amended. Claims 1-24 remain pending.

Allowance of claim 23 is noted.

Objected to claim 21 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 20. Thus, claim 21 is allowable.

Claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-20 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watts in view of Schmitt. Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watts in view of Schmitt and Gustavsson et al. Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smuckler in view of Schmitt. Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smuckler in view of Schmitt and Ohmura et al. These rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

In response to the Applicants' communication filed on October 27, 2003, the Examiner states that Watts discloses being conformable to the shape of a contiguous flexible surface to be heated. The Examiner points to Figure 3 of Watts as providing this teaching. However, it is respectfully argued that Watts does not teach a flexible surface to be heated. In fact, Figure 3 of Watts shows a perspective view of a heating device attached to the back side of automotive type mirror to be heater. Neither Figure 3 itself nor the text pertaining to Figure 3 found at lines 24-41 of column 2 even remotely suggest that the back side of the mirror to be heated is flexible. Quite the contrary, as is generally known, automotive mirrors are rigid structures.

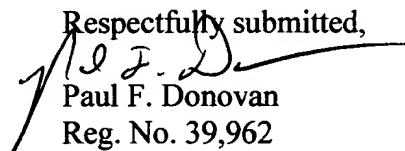
Accordingly, without agreeing with the Examiner as to what is or is not taught by Schmitt, Watts simply does not teach nor does it suggest a flexible substrate that is conformable to the shape of a continuous flexible surface to be heated. In other words, the mirror that is heated in Watts is not flexible. For at least this reason, claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-20 and 24 are allowable over Watts either taken alone or in combination with the other art of record.

In regards to claim 24, the Examiner is of the opinion that Schmitt teaches a fabric construction having a bulk density of about 0.6 g/cm^3 or greater and a thermal diffusivity of about $0.003 \text{ cm}^2/\text{s}$ or greater. Where in fact does Schmitt teach these limitations? Although Schmitt does in fact discuss "fabric" in line 8 of col. 4, "non-woven...polyester" in lines 8-9 of col. 4, and show support layer 7 in Fig. 3, it cannot be said that Schmitt teaches the specific limitations as claimed. In fact, as previously argued, Schmitt teaches away from using a fabric construction having a bulk density of 0.6 g/cm^3 and a thermal diffusivity of about $0.003 \text{ cm}^2/\text{s}$ or greater. Schmitt uses fabric 7 to provide stiffness to the planar structure and would not change its characteristics to allow it to conform to the shape of a contiguous flexible surface to be heated. For at least this additional reason, claim 24 is allowable.

Claims 3, 11 and 22 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons applied thereto, for the additional subject matter recited in each, and for the reasons set forth in the previous communication.

Reconsideration of the rejected claims and allowance of all the pending claims is respectfully requested. In the event that there are any remaining issues that can be addressed and expedited by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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